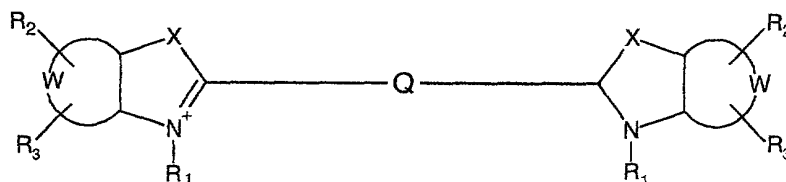


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A symmetric cyanine of the formula:



(1)

wherein:

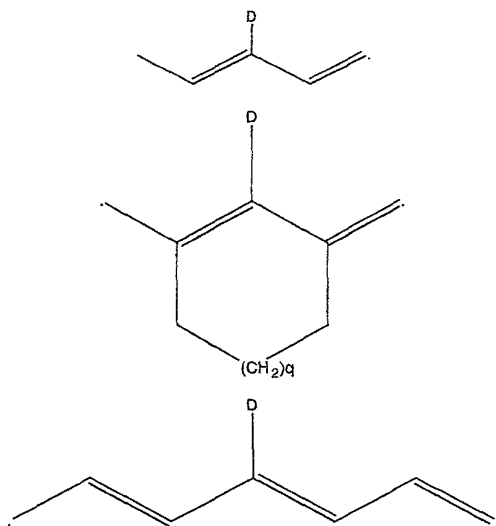
X is selected from the group consisting of O, S and  $C(CH_3)_2$ ;

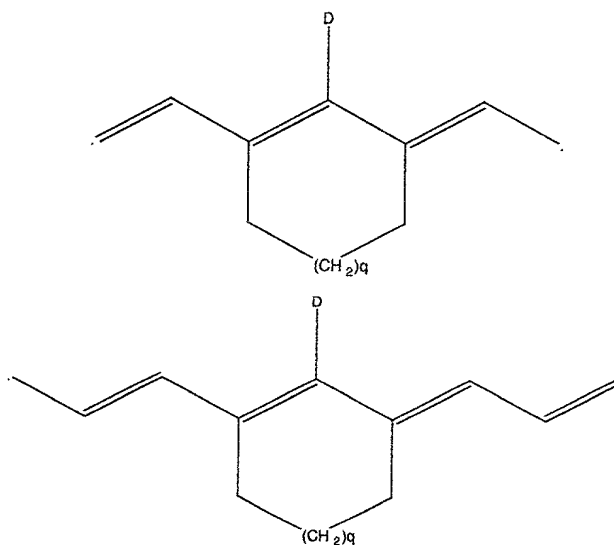
W represents non-metal atoms required to form a benzo-condensed or a naphto-condensed ring;

$R_1$  is selected from the group consisting of  $(CH_2)_nCH_3$ ,  $(CH_2)_nSO_3^-$  and  $(CH_2)_nSO_3H$ , wherein n is an integer selected from 0 to 6 when  $R_1$  is  $(CH_2)_nCH_3$ , and n is an integer selected from 3 to 6 when  $R_1$  is  $(CH_2)_nSO_3^-$  or  $(CH_2)_nSO_3H$ ;

$R_2$  and  $R_3$  are independently selected from the group consisting of H, a sulphonic moiety and a sulphonate moiety;

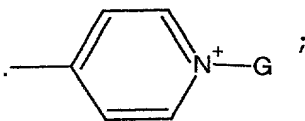
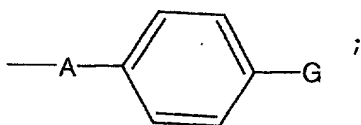
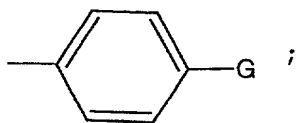
Q is selected from the group consisting of:





wherein  $q$  is 0 or 1 and  $D$  is selected from the group consisting of:

$-\text{C}\equiv\text{C}-\text{G}$ ; and



wherein  $A$  is  $O$  or  $S$  and  $G$  is, or contains a  $N$ ,  $O$  or  $S$  nucleophile moiety or is, or contains a moiety capable of reacting with  $N$ ,  $O$  or  $S$  nucleophiles.